CHAPTER XII

Their Diseases, Death, Mourning, Burial, and Fancies Concerning The Soul

164 Nearly all the Caribs have that disease called the sickness of
● 757 Naples, or as others say, yaws, which is scarcely any better. The disease is fairly common among the Negroes, and some of the French also suffer from it. It is not, however, at least not always, the responsibility of Venus, since even small children have it. To cure themselves, they do not try sweating at all, but grate shellfish, which they swallow with water. They rub themselves with genipa, or with reed leaves burned with liana, which they call mouchao or miby. They do not get well as soon as patients who are made to sweat.

165 One sees very few other diseases among them, and it is a marvel that living such a mean life they are so healthy and fat and live so long. For it is certain that they usually live very long. It was only four or five months ago that the father of The Baron died, and his wife, The Baron's mother, still lives. The Baron, whose wife is still living, has a daughter; this daughter has a daughter and this latter already has children. So The Baron is a great-grandfather and his mother is a great-great grandmother [79] and The Baron's daughter, who is a grandmother herself, still has her own grandmother. And this is not the only example to be cited. Their long life must be attributed to their lack of cares.

751 They blame their demon for their diseases and if the illness is long and severe they call the bof'ayko to consult him about it. They
758 have a number of remedies which the women apply to the sick, but they treat the sick no more delicately than they do the healthy.

Relatives rarely or never visit their sick kin. Generally married
[754] people do not visit the sick, because, they say, their bodies emit a force which afflicts the sick even more. That is why when one of The Baron's sons was ill, neither his brother, his sisters, nor his father went to see him; only his mother treated him and she did not communicate at all with his father.

727 When some among them are killed in war, they do what they can to recover the bodies and bury them. Following is how they bury their dead.

1. Origins

101 The true name of these Island Caribs is Callínago. These are the cannibals and man-eaters about whom the Spanish complained so much that they were untameable and that they devoured such prodigious numbers of them and their allies. For this is what the Spanish say in their books. However, I do not wish to have them slandered any more, for I have no grounds to complain about their cruelty. On the contrary I will freely attest their mildness towards me, although it is a sweet cruelty to be chewed, devoured, and torn to pieces in the service of God. The women call them Callíponam. [105]

Caribs of South America are called Galíbi. I have finally learned from captains on the island of Dominica that the words Galíbi and Carib were names that the Europeans had given them. Their true name was Callínago although they designated themselves only with the words ouhaóbanum and balooébonum: that is to say either 'from the islands' 103 and 'from the continent.' The Island Caribs were Galibis from South America who branched off in order to conquer the islands. The captain who led them was small in size but great in courage. He did not eat much and drank even less. He exterminated all the native inhabitants, but kept the women, who have always retained something of their language in order to perpetuate the memory of these conquests. He made them carry the heads of his enemies into the caves among the rocks which are at the edge of the sea, and the French have found these. This was done in order that fathers could show them to their children and they successively to their posterity. They told me that they had had kings, and that the word abouyou was the name of those who carried them on their shoulders. The Caribs who had their carbet [men's house] at the foot of Soufrière on Dominica beyond d'Amichon were descended from them. But I did not ask them if the dynasty had begun with this captain who had conquered the islands nor when these kings had ceased to rule. [229]

[105] The Caribs do not use gayac as a remedy for either yaws or the 104 great pox. When they make forked posts of gayac wood to support their houses they say they make it for themselves and their descendants. Actually this wood seems indestructible. For their children they make

stand up, and fall down continuously, sometimes on their hands and sometimes on their behinds. They walk on all fours getting so used to it that when they are grown up they catch up with the best runners in this way. [405]

Sometimes the Caribs make incisions to cure some inflammation, but most of the time they do it out of fantasy. It is said that the children are gashed instead of being whipped, but I have not seen it done often. [435]

The Caribs have no other paternoster than the flute. The first one to awake at the cock's crow plays his flute, and the others imitate him as they awaken. After this they go to bathe in the river. The women and children go at a different time. Because the river is cold they make fires by groups in two or three places where they warm themselves. If they are soaked by sea water or rain, or if they are dirty or overheated by some exertion, they return to wash themselves again. Besides this they never fail to go bathing at noon and in the evening. I think that these baths contribute the most to the preservation of their health, and so do their fasts when they are moderate. [383] The children in order to learn how to swim and become accustomed to the ocean waves, as well as to amuse themselves, lay on small planks. They let themselves drift against the breakers and are driven back into the mouth of a river. Others who are stronger let themselves drift with the current of the river and meet the breakers which are rough and frightening where the river hits them, particularly in the district of cabester [sic] where the sea is rougher and the streams are faster. And when they see someone upside down in the waves, or standing there, they laugh to see them when we would be fearful. [314]

The Carib children, having prepared birdlime, cut long poles and attach at the end a very pliable rod which has been smeared with glue. They hold it so that the end is near the flowers where the humming birds find their food. When these birds are not watchful, they hit them with the small rod and having been touched with this rod they remain stuck. The children run quickly, seize them, and tear off the glued feathers, gut the birds, and wrap them in leaves. They dry them in the fire and trade them to the French for hooks and pins. [220] One type of fly makes holes in the sand to live there. The small Caribs kill them, split them in half, and pick out a small sac filled with honey which they eat. [398] The children make horns out of the stem of a certain plant [486], and the men make whistles out of the leg bones of pelicans. [287]

2: Breton--45 M-5 (ca. 1650) 1665 ST13 Callinago ST13

10. Lore and Learning

759 The Caribs have no knowledge of liberal arts or mechanical skills, not even having words to express them. However, they practice them to the extent that nature has given them knowledge, and necessity requires it. They do not know how to open a vein, but this does not mean that they are ignorant of drawing blood if they must. The instrument they use is neither a lancet nor scalpel, and they do not pierce the vein nor make a deep cut. Instead, they slightly scratch the skin with an instrument which they make from
413 an agouti thigh bone which has an agouti tooth imbedded in one end and is tied with a cotton thread. They sharpen the tooth, and holding the handle press lightly on the flesh and make scratches. Then they rub off the blood with ouallomay straw. [190]

[159] [263] All of the Caribs are extremely melancholy, moody, and silent. They have appetites for odd foods as if they were pregnant women, eating chalk, or if they do not have it, eating earth. The women and children all do it, which make them dry and finally causes their death. I have always in my accounts mentioned their
751 melancholy and the difficult nature of their language. It has been
754 commonly said that the devil beats them. I have never seen nor heard of such a thing from the Caribs in all of the nineteen years I have spoken with them. The reason why such a statement has been made is twofold. Firstly, when lying on the left side their spleen is compressed by the left elbow. It sends black fumes to the brain which causes black and horrible dreams, as if they were at grips with maboyas or were being taken away by them. I have taken some of the Caribs in my arms when I saw them in such pains. I wiped off their sweat and carried them out of their hammocks, and they would have willingly fallen on their knees to thank me because I had protected them from the maboyas who were beating them. The second reason for the statement that the devil beats them is that at the slightest harm they suffer they say it is a spell or an evil given by maboyas or sorcerers. This does not mean that they have been beaten, but rather that they have been sent or given such evils through spells. [341]

278 957 The value of herbs is not unknown to the Caribs who collect them when they are sick in order to drink as medicine the juice which they draw out. Ordinarily the herbs are crushed between their hands and put into a pot full of water. They rub this mixture on the sick

person, whom they expose to the noonday sun, and let the medicine dry for a time. They know trees with great medicinal powers, and they peel off the second bark and crush it to press out the juice which they drink as a medicine. The women sometimes specialize so thoroughly in this profession that they are suspected of sorcery. They have killed certain women because of these suspicions, although one is never certain of the truth of these charges. [320]

The Caribs sometimes wear around their neck necklaces made of small, long calabashes as big as the finger, and filled with Manifenix meat. Others wear bits of jaguar skin, claws of birds of prey, and other things which they wear as relics, especially at their feasts. At other times they always have some of these around their neck. I do not know whether this is out of superstition or to protect themselves from magic spells, or from an evil, or in the hope of becoming valiant. It seems they wear them for all these reasons and especially for the last two. [192] The Caribs when they are sick do not tolerate married people visiting them during their illness because they believe that their presence would impede their recovery. [365]

The chípiou tree has sap which is so bitter that it is used to designate all bitter things. If the Caribs handle its bark they communicate such a great bitterness to everything they touch that these things could not be used. They pound this bark, press out its juices and rub people with it who have yaws, that is to say, the great pox. I believe that it has some benefit against this evil. [160] They dry a reed, burn it, and rub the ashes on those who have yaws. The stems of the reed are used to lath roofs or enclose the walls of their houses. [351] Yaws is a natural disease which is as common in the islands as syphilis is in France. The Caribs cure themselves easily and without danger, not only because the temperature of the air is very even, but also because of the powerful remedies growing in the Torrid Zone. These remedies were taken by an 1,800 league voyage to France and lost their potency. They use the juice of chípiou bark which they rub on the outside, blacken themselves with Genipa juice, and use ashes of reeds. They take the juice of some vines like the mibi which is mixed with the grated back part of conch shell. When the big pimples burst they apply little tufts of raw cotton which binds the lesions and prevents deformity. But yaws are not very dangerous although common among

1757 them, and all the above mentioned remedies heal without steam
[164] baths or mercury. Conversely, small pox which is very rare among them is very dangerous in the same way that the plague is for us in France. [478]

1751 They believe that pains in the joints such as gout are caused by
1765 the boyes of South America and their gods. [426] They use a light-colored green stone as a remedy for kidney stones, to help women give birth, and for epilepsy. The women hang them around their neck like one of the most precious of their jewels. They receive them from the men who bring them from South America. There are also
1757 imitation green stones which have no value. [445] The riboûlichi
[204] is a true rush if one of its roots is crushed and absorbed in some liquor by a woman in childbirth; it makes the delivery easy, but if too much is taken the child will be harmed as has been actually seen. [439]
[164] Ophthalmia is a common disease among the Caribs which appears almost every year, and is spread in the islands inhabited by the Caribs. It causes a fair number among them to be one-eyed. During the first five or six years this evil did not seem to approach the French, but now it makes its violence felt too often. [397] The Caribs purge themselves only when they are extremely sick. However, they only eat crabs, Lambis, bugaus, and some other poor nourishment which causes many boils. They pierce some boils with a ray's tail and squeeze the others to empty them. If the pus is such that it will not come out they take a hair which they dip into it and empty it. [340]
1757 The chibouleléme is a common weed which the Caribs boil in water.
278 They then use the broth to relieve themselves from constipation. [147] The Caribs shred the skin of the palm Christi and make a compress for the forehead as a remedy for headache. They heat the leaf and rub the afflicted part with it and receive relief. [25] Balium is a herb with a stench used as remedy against fever. [171]

1752 When the Caribs rid themselves of chiggers they make a small cut with a fish bone or a sharp little splinter and press them between their nails and make them leave. They also use shark oil or porpoise oil to make them leave or urucu mixed with oil of couàheu. [148]

1757 Herbs which cure the wounds made by poison arrows are called
[278] boûlàla. [475] To cure arrow wounds they use a palma Christi leaf which they warm on the fire and rub on the wound. According to Captain Baron one of his hosts had been hit in the heel by a poisoned

807 arrow and now and then he suffered from the old wound. It was favorably treated by this remedy. When the Caribs have a swelling on the arm they incise it with an agouti tooth and make it bleed. Then they take a big papaya and when it is half cooked in the ashes they apply it hot against the swelling to draw off the inflammation. [141]

821 The Caribs do not understand what happens when there is an eclipse and they say that the maboya has eaten the moon. They dance all the night and dare not stop once they have started. [370] They do not know the line of the equinox, but know very well when the sun passes and repasses its zenith, that is to say, straight above their head. [210] They have no clocks nor any knowledge of hours, [805] and when we say "What time is it?" they say "Where is the sun?" If it is nine o'clock they say "The sun is quite high." If it is afternoon they say "The sun turns." At four o'clock they say "It is not yet too late." [263] The Caribs have terms for "full moon," "zenith of the moon," "no more moon," "end of the moon," and "eclipsed moon" [163, 370], and "first day of the moon." [374] They count years by the passing of the Pleiades for they say, "How many Pleiades does your son have?" which means how old is he. [163] When the Caribs see some comet they say that it is a sign or warning for them. [88] [They know some planets, cf. 338, 431, 473; and some constellations, cf. 65, 163, 165, 186, 192, 194, 265, 289, 406, 421.--Editor]

802 The Caribs count up to five and no further. To express ten they say "all the fingers." If there is less they bend their fingers accordingly. If they wish to count up to twenty they open their fingers and then indicate their toes and say "fingers and toes." If they wish to count even more they say as many as hairs on the head or grains of sand on the seashore. [78] They have the names for only four colors: yellow, red, white, and black. [239]

000 The Caribs willingly brought me letters coming from Guadeloupe because they believed that these letters talked with me, and that I had a god as do their boyes who advised me about everything in these letters. This is because they did not yet grasp the meaning of our writing. [300]

627 I heard it was said to Mr. de Parquet that two Caribs were fighting a duel, shooting arrows at each other. During the time it takes to say the 51st Psalm, they were in continual movement, and to avoid each other's arrows they remained at a distance from each other. When they were forced to separate it was found that they had done no harm to one other.

Enough has now been said concerning warfare among the Caribs.

11. Disease, Death, and Funerals

164 There is no rule so general that it allows no exception. In the first part of this chapter I described the robust physical condition of the Caribs. It should not be inferred from these remarks that European diseases are rare among them. More precisely, it should be said that the Caribs suffer from these diseases less frequently than we do in Europe. This is fortunate for them, for if they recover from their diseases this is due more to the powerful efforts of nature than to the remedies and treatment they receive.

●757 It is certain that they have very excellent remedies. But if a remedy is very successful for one disease they may use if for all other sicknesses; they do not know the causes of sickness nor the qualities of their herbs, which often do them more harm than good. As far as good treatment is concerned, they do not know what it is to coddle the sick, and even those who are about to die are fed as if they were completely well. They especially fear smallpox because they have no treatment for it, and it often ravages them in the same way that the plague does in Europe. Very few among them bear its scars because most of them die of it. In the wet season they suffer from fevers which they cure by an external remedy; on the wrist and forehead they place some cachima [cachimilla?] leaves and other herbs crushed together. They also use a shred of pimento, as we have said, which they rub and pass over the eyes to make the fever pass away. They are also tormented at all times of the year by an eye sickness which I shall describe in my next chapter, because the French are also afflicted by it. This disease is communicable not only from family to family but even from island to island.

●757 Although the Caribs have few remedies for this affliction, they have excellent ones for white specks or cataracts on the eyes.

Mr. du Parquet was threatened by an unfortunate blindness caused by two great cataracts which blocked his vision. As he was on the point of leaving for France to get treatment, an old Carib called Pilot promised that he would have his wives cure Mr. du Parquet if he would visit his carbet. Mr. du Parquet had himself carried there and Pilot's wives washed his eyes with cotton dipped into the juice of certain herbs. Then they wiped his eyes with their tongues, and five or six days later the largest speck fell off and a little time later the other did the same.

They are little tormented by most of the diseases we have in Europe. The shameful disease called by them epian, which is really great pox in its highest degree of malignancy, rarely leaves them. Nevertheless, they say they can cure it easily with the sap of a tree which they use as a liquid medicine. They also blacken their bodies with Genipa juice and burned seeds. Actually they do not cure but only arrest the disease. Even some children are born with it, and die from its effects. It is believed that the disorder of their debauches contribute to this disease, but to a greater extent their food is held responsible, which is only fish, too fresh and half cooked. In addition the lizards which they eat have the malignant quality of renewing the disease in those who have been cured of it.

They bleed themselves by making slight scratches with an agouti tooth, but so little blood oozes out that when a man has his entire body scratched in this way it would not more than fill one of our standard bleeding cups. They are subject to certain boils which appear on their buttocks and around their thighs. These are ordinarily only manifestations of great pox. Father Raymond [Breton] says they pierced these boils with the fishbones from the tail of a ray, which seems very strange to me since the stings of these fishbones are almost incurable. When a disease has left them they purge themselves, but this often does more harm than good.

Women know the qualities of plants and all related things better than do the men. They use herbs quite well. When the natural [755] powers of these medicines fail, they have recourse to their boye, who in turn consults his devil, who cures or pronounces the sentence of death, as I have already said.

5: Rouse E-4 (no date) 1948 ST13 Callinago ST13 (1650-1700)

figures through which the maboya gave oracular answers. There were, 756
however, no household idols or priests, as among the *Arawak*.

The *Carib* often attributed sickness to the influence of sorcerers who 754
had obtained control of maboya. They consulted a shaman to determine the identity of the sorcerer and were usually directed to a woman, from whom no reprisal was to be feared. The woman was made to pick up a shell or a fishbone and to confess that she had administered this in food to cause the disease. She was then tortured and killed.

The shaman was also brought in to effect cures. He worked in the 755
same way as at other séances, setting up a table bearing food offerings and oüicou at one end of the hut and calling his maboya with songs and tobacco smoke. The shaman first asked his maboya whether the disease would be fatal. If so, he abandoned the ceremony and told the patient to prepare for death. If not, the shaman and his maboya approached the patient, touched the part of his body which pained him, sometimes sucking it, and drew out an object—an imaginary poison, thorns, pieces of bone, or splinters of wood and stone. These were supposed to have caused the disease. Then the shaman rubbed the sick person's body with the juice of the *Ginipa* fruit, producing a dark brown color. When the patient had recovered, he gave a feast for the shaman, at the same time providing food [465] offerings for the latter's maboya.

The *Carib* fasted upon a number of occasions: At puberty; when be- 785
coming a chief, a father, or a warrior; after killing an enemy; and at the death of a close relative. A man might also be asked to fast when a relative was sick, in the hope that it might relieve the pain. A typical schedule of fasting has already been described above (p. 557) in connection with the birth of the first child. The people did not vomit for religious purposes, but only to rid their stomachs of an excess of food.

Women knew of certain herbs, fruits, roots, oils, and gums which they 757
used to cure diseases. For indigestion they prepared an infusion from [278] the bark of the chipou tree and from the *Lambys* shell; they had another drink made by pounding up the bark of certain trees and vines when the sap was thick. If the indigestion had been caused by eating crabs, they ate as an antidote the flesh of the manatee or tortoise, which caused the body to break out into pimples. Then they treated the latter with the juice of the junipa nut or with sap from the leaves of the balisier tree mixed with the ashes of burned seeds. The former was also used to heal wounds. The wives sucked the poison out of snake bites, applied an infusion to the wound, and also prepared a drink as an antidote. They had another antidote for arrow poisoning. Bathing was used to treat some wounds, sweat baths for others. Sometimes they scarified the body to draw off blood.

6: Taylor E-5 (1930-1937) 1938
ST13 Callinago ST13

On the other hand, Caribs consider the white man's custom of manuring land as disgusting, and would never knowingly eat food so grown. The finding of dung in a provision ground is sufficient reason for abandoning a part or the whole of the cultivation. A serious dispute arose, while I was in the Reserve, because one family accused members of another family of leaving excrement on their land. Perhaps this is one more reason why the Caribs' gardens are so far from their dwellings.

There does not seem to be any hard and fast rule with regard to the division of labor between the sexes, except such as physical fitness dictates. Hunting, fishing, sawing, land clearing, canoe and house building are obviously men's occupations, here as elsewhere. Work on the provision ground is fairly evenly shared. Twine and cords, torches, shark oil, Carib panniers, manioc sifters, and "couleuvres" are made by men usually, though not exclusively. Vegetable oil (palma Christi, known here as "carapat"), open, radial kitchen and garden baskets (corbeilles), the cleaning and (until recently) spinning of cotton, the preparation of farine and cassava bread—except for the grating of the manioc, at which the men often help—and all other household duties are women's work. Although a Carib be returning straight to his house after a fishing expedition, he expects his women folk to meet him on the shore and to carry the fish home. When compelled to carry a load himself, the Carib man always puts it on his shoulder or back, whereas the women have adopted the Creole negro custom of bearing burdens on the head.

River bathing is a daily habit with all Caribs, but once a month the Carib man takes a special kind of bath in the privacy of his own home with water in which certain herbs have soaked. The names of three so used are: the sensitive plant (*Mimosa pudica*), sou marqué (*Cassia bicapsularis*), and kudjuruk (or kugururk—unidentified). The bath must be taken on the night when the moon is new or "good" (that is, for planting), and its object is that of a spiritual antiseptic, said to counteract and defeat the evil effects of possible sorcery or pial directed against the bather during the preceding moon.

A few simple remedies used by the Caribs of Dominica today are, in the case of—

Local inflammation: Half of an ember-baked green papaya applied hot as a poultice.

Internal contusion: The gum of the lowland red gommier (*Bursera gummifera*) as a plaster.

Wounds and cuts: The pounded heart of the kanu tree(?), together with salt. Shark oil and pimento leaves are also used, as is the fat of the Tête-Chien boa.

Flux, or intestinal chill: An infusion of the bark or roots of the wild white guava.

6: Taylor E-5 (1930-1937) 1938
ST13 Callinago ST13

757 278 Colic: An infusion of the seeds or leaves of the bay tree (Carib, Achuru: *Pimenta acris*).

Debility in women: A concoction made from the tuber called Carib (or red) chalotte (*Cipura* sp.?).

Lack of appetite: Water in which has soaked Cimaruba chips (wild quassia, *Simarouba amara*).

These are straightforward houshold simples. Others partake more of the nature of charms. Of the latter, the best known are: "Surette de montagne," a sweet-smelling vine found only in the depths of the high-woods, and "l'envers caraïbe" (*Maranta indica* sp.?), a rare species of small-leaved native arrowroot (not the ordinary white or red maranta) with reddish leaf stems and tubers that go straight down and are said to intertwine or "plait" themselves. Native tobacco and a stupefying variety of ivy, or caapi, are known, but are not, as far as I could learn, now used. Earth or clay is eaten [261] by some, but the practice is regarded as a vice by the community. On the other hand, many vouch for the good effects of one's own or another's urine, drunk warm, as a cure for poisoning or stomach ache (an emetic?); while others chew the gum of the gommier (*Dacryodes hexandra* and *Icica heptaphylla*) in order to improve their wind." [832] An aphrodisiac, known as "poudre pine tortue" (powdered turtle's penis) is made and sold in the island.

787 "A Carib does not dream for nothing," I was told. He believes his dreams announce or portend grave events affecting himself, his family, or his friends. It certainly is amazing how often such omens prove correct.

753 754 All serious sickness and death itself are looked upon, not as the result of disease or age, but as the works of extra-natural agencies known as piaï. Thus, little confidence is placed in ordinary medical means of restoring health. The Caribs do not fear death, but are terrified at the idea of the hospital, and especially of being separated from their home environment in their last moments.

754 A piaï, to become effective, must be instituted by three persons—usually two men and a woman. The actual harm in any piaï is wrought by spirits who have, so to speak, no personal grievance, but, bullet-like, are merely unleashed and set onto a given person when he or she unwittingly touches some object—such as a stick or branch placed across the path—harmless in itself, but magically dealt with by the piaïmen in order to make it the agency for releasing the piaï. So one may, by good luck or cunning, escape a piaï intended for oneself, or fall, by ill chance, under a piaï intended for somebody else.

"They are taking life tonight," said an old Carib friend of mine the night he died of what I took to be a pleurisy brought on by the enforced wearing of wet clothes. I have often wondered whether he referred to the persons he believed to have bewitched him or to the death spirits themselves. Three years later (two weeks ago as I write now)

they liked for a further period of two or three months, and thereafter only continued to abstain from certain activities and meats for some time.

When the child began to be given fish to eat at about the age of two years, its hair was cut for the first time ceremonially, and its mother's temples shaved. The piercing of its ears, etc., apparently also took place at this ceremony (nikulukáyanų, nùbukaétių) which, according to Breton's description, was held concurrently with an elétuak festival.

The latter appears to have been a family rather than a tribal affair, although intended for the carrying out of all the *rites de passage,* such as initiation of infants (into the tribe) and adolescents (into manhood), and for the purification and reintegration of those who had for the first time become parents or had killed an enemy.

> Il y a peu de Sauvages qui ayent femmes et enfans, qui ne fassent ce festin icy, qui est un de leurs plus solemnels: ils sont quelque fois des quatre mois à s'y préparer, on y rase le poil des tempes aux femmes, et à leur petits enfans ausquels on commence d'y faire manager du poisson.

Besides large quantities of wiku to be prepared for the feathered dancers (eletuakátių táomáliti) and guests, basketry tables (matútu) and other utensils for the rites must be made, and those asked to help by making them (itawánəmuku) repaid for their trouble by a special drinking-party (ítehwennə). Moreover, after the elétuak festival all such articles were held to be fair plunder for the guests.

The name, elétuak, appears to connote *a putting out from* or *forth-putting,* (cf. éleletuába *incise! let [blood]!* < éle *power, strength;* and as a stem: *choose, extend, endure:* élele *speech* or *flame;* átu[ra] *[to]put forth);* and the essential part of the rites performed on these occasions consisted in blood-letting.[6] Breton goes on to describe them thus:

> . . . les grands, voire les mariez apportent quand et eux des oyseaux de rapine, les petits des petits, les mariez des gros et grands qu'ils ont pris dans le nid et nourris pour ce mystère. Le capitaine qui est prié pour cela prend les oyseaux et leur casse la teste sur leurs testes qui en restent ensanglantées. Il incise les petits et les grands, mène les petits dans leurs lits qui y doivent demeurer sans manger, et en la posture qu'il leur donne, sans laquelle ils croyent qu'ils demeureroient bossus ou contrefais, suivant celle qu'ils prendroient dans ce lit [i. e. hammock]. On écrase les oyseaux des grands (s'ils ont eu enfant, ou s'ils ont tué quelque Arroüague) avec quantité de gros grains de poivre [*Capsicum*], ou pimant [< Carib, boémwę *Capsicum* <

6 Hunters still make razor cuts in their arms to improve their luck, while incision and cupping are practised to relieve pain.

13: Hodge & Taylor N, E-5 (1930-1956) 1957
ST13 Callinago ST13

Dasheen [14]

X 824 Numerous horticultural varieties of this species, whose native home is India and the Orient, are cultivated for their edible corms throughout the tropical and warm temperate regions of the world. The taro of the Pacific Isles is also a horticultural form of this species, and is eaten boiled or baked like potatoes or in the form of a fermented paste called poi. The dasheen is generally [252] prepared, in the West Indies, in the same manner and in as many varied ways as potatoes; in addition a good flour can be made from the tubers, and the young shoots when properly prepared may be eaten as a green vegetable. In Dominica the dasheen is [262] one of the favorite and staple foods of the Creole population and is found in all home provision gardens.

The Carib Indian has in more recent years « borrowed » this plant for his own usage, and grows it for the corms and young shoots.

Specimen citation: 9 (T), 24 (T), 32 (T).

Dieffenbachia seguine (Jacquin) Schott, Melet. 1: 20. 1832.
Dumb Cane. — Sigin, Sijin, Canne Gratter. — *udere.*

Dumb Cane grows in low, wet places throughout tropical America. The English name refers to the irritating sap which is highly inflammatory to the tongue. In Dominica this species is particularly abundant in the ravines near the settlement of Bataka in the Carib Reserve. Two « varieties » are said to occur, one called [578] « seigin rouge ».

[278] Sigin is said to be pounded by the Carib and placed as a poison in the food of an enemy. As such it is claimed to « kill 757 four generations »! The leaves of sigin rouge are withered by heat and wrapped around dropsical, scarred, or varicose legs in order to « draw out the water », and in the same way are used as a local treatment for yaws.

Specimen citation: 3174.

[14] It has been shown that this is an anglicised form of « de Chine » which in turn probably derives from « taro or chou de Chine », the full name originally used in the Lesser Antilles for this introduced species. Other names, certain of them applied to the New World tanias (*Xanthosoma* spp.), also, are used throughout the Antilles. For instance in Martinique dasheen is often called « chou de Chine », while in Guadeloupe it has the name « madère », applied in Dominica and Martinique to one of its varieties.

13: Hodge & Taylor N. E-5 (1930-1956) 1957
ST13 Callinago ST13

824[x]

Lantana camara Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 627. 1753.
Wild Sage. — Mabizou.

Wild sage is widely distributed throughout tropical and subtropical America from Florida to Argentina; it has been introduced also into similar climatic regions of the Old World. As a weedy shrub it occurs in Dominica in waste places at lower and middle elevations.

The root is placed in unheated water which is then drunk by the Carib as a cure for gonorrhea. If this plant is identical with the « Indian sage » (*waluhúmeru*) of Breton the « balm », distilled by detaching a leaf, was used as a styptic. Sufferers from pleurisy would also expose their sick side to steam rising from a pot of boiling leaves. For a further use of this plant see *Ipomoea pes-caprae*. [278] [757]

Specimen citation: 858, 3201.

Petrea kohautiana Presl, Bot. Bemerk. 99. 1844.
Purple Wreath. — Fleur (La Fête) de Dieu.

A showy woody vine of the Lesser Antilles, common on Dominica at lower elevations especially on the windward coast.

The purple flowers of this vine, together with those of branda (*Chiococca alba*), are brewed into a tea used as an abortive. Another tea, utilizing this plant as an ingredient, is described under *Myrcia citrifolia*. [278] [847]

Specimen citation: 870, 3279.

Stachytarpheta spp.
Verveine. — *kuiékuiéti* (« slippery, slimy »), *kurébié dkuani* (« bird-bath » or « twist-bath »).

Two species of verveine, *S. cayennensis* (L. C. Rich.) Vahl and *S. jamaicensis* (L.) Vahl, are common in Dominica. These plants are weeds with a wide dispersal in tropical America.

A tea from verveine, made by boiling the whole plant, is used by the Carib in ritual bathing (for undoing spells, etc.), for colds and in fact for « any illness ». The whole plant also is a constituent of not only a special purgative tea given after parturition (see *Jatropha* spp.) but also a ritual bath discussed under *Ocimum micranthum*. [278] [846]

Specimen citation: 3213, 3305.